

PE1731/M

Perth & Kinross Council submission of 25 October 2019

The Public Petitions Committee considered the above petition at its meeting on 19 September 2019.

At this meeting, the Committee discussed the importance of public meetings striking an appropriate balance between transparency and the need for certain issues to be discussed in private, such as, staffing matters. The Committee therefore agreed to write to all local authorities to seek their views on the action called for in the petition, in addition to the following specific questions—

- What is your policy on the audio recording of public council meetings? Perth and Kinross Council currently aims to record its public meetings and upload them to be viewed online within a few days of the meeting. You can view our recordings here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/PerthandKinrossCouncil>.
- If your council does not permit audio recordings of public meetings, what is the rationale for this? *Not applicable.*
- What are considered to be the concerns of allowing members of the public to audio record public council meetings? *The concerns would be in relation to members of the public not capturing the whole of the tabled business under discussions. Or alternatively members of the public may either accidentally or deliberately, record discussions taking place around the meeting, for example in the public gallery or during a recess in the meeting, for this reason permission for recording by members of the public should be treated with caution.*
- With regards to the actions being called for in the petition, are there any constraints faced by local authorities on what has been proposed? *The only other constraints may be in relation to concerns about interference with existing microphones etc from other devices being used by the public.*

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to permit audio recording of all public council meetings by members of the public.

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